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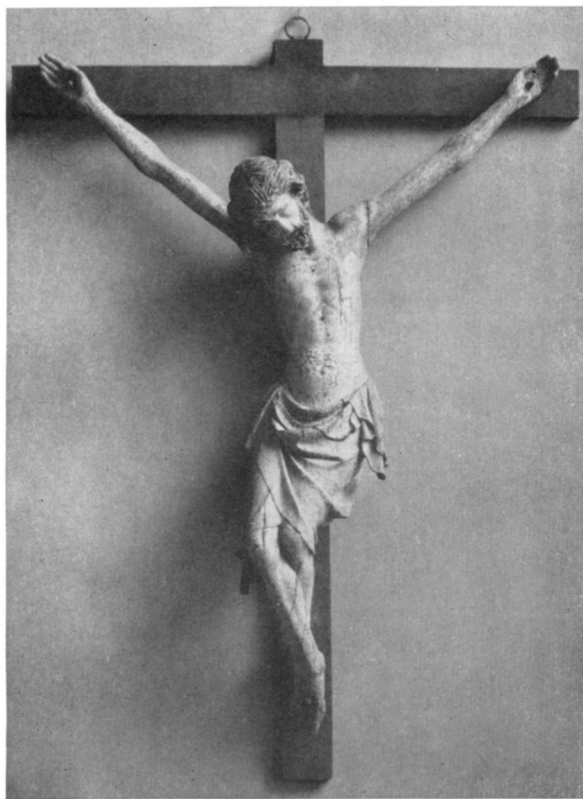
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AN EARLY GOTHIC CRUCIFIX

WOOD carving was largely practised throughout the Middle Ages, but owing to the easy destructibility of the material, surviving specimens of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are exceedingly rare. The Museum has lately acquired a su-

the broken and rippling folds of drapery about the hips. The body is painted in flesh tints; the hair is dark with traces of gold; the drapery is gray blue. This tonality, worn and fused by time, complements the exquisitely subtle modeling of the emaciated body and the gently tragic face.

The impersonal quality of thirteenth-



CRUCIFIX CARVED IN OAK
FRENCH, EARLY GOTHIC PERIOD

preme example in an early Gothic crucifix, probably from the Ile-de-France and dating about 1300. The figure¹ is carved in oak and retains to a large degree its original polychromy; the cross and nails are modern.

The body bears slightly forward; the head inclines to the right; the legs are crossed. The continuous, sweeping lines of the body are emphasized by contrast with

¹Height, 45 inches. Shown in Wing J, Room 13.

century sculpture is here modified by a new spirit of appealing tenderness. In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, to which period the Museum crucifix may be ascribed, Christian art was abandoning its formalistic aspect and becoming more emotional. Instead of representing the Saviour as a hierarchic conception, impassive, open-eyed, and crowned as an earthly sovereign, the suffering Christ is now depicted with pathos, but

without the excessive realism of the later Gothic period. This new emotional attitude toward the representation of Christian themes appeared in France during the last quarter of the thirteenth century and gradually superseded the earlier didactic and idealistic interpretations as exemplified in the vast encyclopaedic programs of monumental church sculpture. As illustrating the change to a more personal and emotional mood, scenes of the Passion appear on the exterior of churches for the first time at this period; the Crucifixion is still rarely represented but occurs on the façades of Rouen, Rheims, and Strassburg cathedrals. The Museum crucifix, still largely idealistic in form but infused with a new pathetic quality, would seem to belong to the late years of the thirteenth or to the beginning of the fourteenth century. More specifically, it may be compared with the work of ivory carvers in the question of dating.

A close analogy exists to an ivory triptych from St. Sulpice-de-Tarn in the Cluny Museum, which M. Koechlin assigns to the Atelier of the Tabernacles of the Virgin, which flourished at Paris during the early years of the fourteenth century.¹ Further comparison may be made with an ivory diptych in the South Kensington Museum, similarly dated by Maskell.² Paris was the center of ivory production at this time, and the analogies of our crucifix to the ivories suggest a similar place of origin. If the crucifix were not executed at Paris itself, it would seem at least to be surely a work of the Ile-de-France school.

H. S.

AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH DAY-BED

THE second half of the seventeenth century was marked throughout western Europe by a decided amelioration of living conditions amounting, in the case of the wealthy upper classes, to the attainment of a degree of luxury hitherto reached only

by the very great. This change has been recorded for us not only in the amount of furniture of this date which has survived but also in its remarkable variety of form. A real leisure class seems to have come into existence who demanded according to their taste the maximum amount of physical comfort.

As one instance of this, we find the day-bed or couch appearing as a separate article of furniture during the reign of Louis XIV. One of the earliest mentions of it is found in the memoirs of Mme. de Motteville (c. 1650) and the earliest surviving actual examples corroborate this date. Up to this time, the gentleman and lady of high degree, and necessarily their inferiors, seem to have taken their "forty winks" in the majestic though cumbersome bed which for many hundreds of years had been the most imposing article of furniture in all households. Reclining there in state, they had given audience to their retainers and conducted a large part of their affairs, a custom which nominally in the *lit de justice* of the French monarchy long survived the actuality. The conservatism which hedged about royal etiquette had no such force for the comfort-loving noble whose seigniorial functions had largely fallen into disuse with his residence at or near the court. A refinement of manners following on this increased ease of life brought with it a desire for privacy. The bed chamber was deprived of a large part of its public uses, which were relegated to the anteroom, from which developed the boudoir of the eighteenth century. Here it was that the nobility of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries received informal visits and could fall asleep comfortably over the maxims of La Rochefoucauld or the latest fable of La Fontaine. But a ponderous *bon viveur* with a tendency to gout would not find a chair the most comfortable resting place even with the aid of a footstool. What could be simpler than to extend the seat of this chair over six or eight legs instead of four and make it possible to recline at ease, with a comfortable padding of down mattress and cushions over the caning. Thus appeared the *lit de repos*, chaise longue, or day-bed. With the eighteenth

¹R. Koechlin. *Quelques Ateliers d'Ivoiriers Français*, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1905.

²A. Maskell. *Ivories*, 1905.